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PRESS BANQUET * 16

— AT TORONTO.

Speeches of Premier Bowell and Mr. Davin.

SPLENDID RECEPTION TO THE PREMIER

The annual banquet of the Canadian Press Association, says the Toronto Globe, was the most brilliant social affair which the Association has ever held. The attendance taxed the seating capacity of the rotunda of the Board of Trade. The gathering was nearly altogether composed of newspaper men, past and present. The President, Mr. T. H. Preston, presided. Upon his right hand were Hon. G. A. Kirkpatrick, N. Flood Davin, M. P., Goldwin Smith, Charles Lindsay and Rev Dr Dewar; and on his left Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Hon. Geo. W. Ross, and W. F. Maclean, M. P. Those present included nearly all who attended the afternoon session.

A few minutes after 8 o'clock the chairman rising, stilled the clatter of dishes and tongues, to which the orchestra were playing an unheeded accompaniment. He explained that as Sir

Mackenzie Bowell was obliged to leave early, he would break in upon the not altogether finished menu and ask the company to drink his health. He then proposed the health of the Queen. It was followed by the singing of the national anthem.

THE PREMIER.

The President in a few well chosen remarks introduced the Premier.

Sir Mackenzie Bowell on rising to speak was received with loud applause again and again renewed. He prefaced his remarks by paying a tribute to the President, whose father he knew before him. "It is not my intention to make a speech," he continued. "I could not to-night if I tried. I thank you most heartily for the kind invitation you have given me to be present to-night. I very much regret, as I said this afternoon, the absence of so many of the gentlemen who

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took part in organizing the original association in the City of Kingston, under that prince of men, W. Gil'espie. (Applause.) He was an honest man, a man of conviction. He was not afraid to express his opinion, and he always respected the opinions of those who differed from him." (Hear, hear.) Sir Mackenzie, continuing, said he regretted that he could not remain for the toast to which he was originally asked to speak, "Canada." But he was satisfied that those with whom it was left to respond would do the subject justice. He paid a tribute to publishers, editors, reporters and practical printers. "I have very much sympathy," he added "with the practical printer. I have gone through every phase of newspaper work, and am therefore speaking from experience. (Laughter.) In fact, there are many in my old constituency who are of opinion that I am little or no better than when I was an apprentice in a newspaper office some 60 years ago" (Laughter.) In closing he wished the association continued success, and ventured the opinion that in its members he felt the future of the country was safe. (Loud and continued cheering.)

Sir Mackenzie left the room immediately afterwards, Mr. Davin accompanying him, the whole company rising as he went out.

A few minutes were spent in further discussion of the menu, and then the toast list was taken up. The secretary, Mr. J. B. McLean, first read a telegram of greeting received from the press men of British Columbia.

The President then gave the toast of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, to which His Honor, the popular occupant of that office, responded in the happiest

manner, praising the press in the most emphatic way.

Mr. John Cameron, of London, then proposed "Canada."

Hon. G. W. Ross replied, exposing in an elaborate speech, Canada's wonderful resources, dwelling in eloquent language on the North-West Territories, and what they meant to Canada, "and what he asked are we, what are you, doing to people these vast Territories?" Population was one of our greatest needs. He sat down amid cheers.

Mr. Goldwin Smith, who was received with great enthusiasm, reviewed the progress made by journalism, and, contrasted the press of to-day, local and metropolitan, with what it was when he and others a quarter of a century ago, set about raising the tone of the press and securing liberty of opinion. (cheers.)

Mr. T. W. Anglin proposed the toast of the Dominion and Provincial Parliament, coupled with the names of Messrs. N. F. Davin, M. P., W. J. McLean, M. P., and James Innis, M. P.

Mr. Davin on rising was received with cheers. He said: "Your Honour, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I had hoped there would have been nothing in the speeches this evening to which any body could object, above all anything of a personal nature; but Hon. Mr. Ross I am sorry to say has not been careful to observe the unexpressed law on occasions like the present; and I think there was a personal reflection of which I have reason to complain, when he in solemn tones pointedly asked, with as it seemed at the moment, a special glance at me — "What are you doing to people that vast country?" (Great laughter and cheers.) I am glad to see the ladies here, and indeed their presence is eminently appro-

priate, because as anybody who has seen or read of the way they express their fondness for children, fathers, mothers, brothers, cousins, &c., they belong to a press association (laughter) which was in existence hundreds of years before the birth of your clumsier and more prosaic organization. (laughter) The press may be well content with the way it is spoken of to-day, and I would add my little coronal of the floral tribute were it not that I am afraid of doing anything that might, could, would or should aid in the impairment of the bloom of the invincible modesty of the press. The representative of the Queen has eulogized you; one of the ministers of Ontario has sounded your praise; the Prime Minister has added his encomiums; and the greatest literary man on the continent, one who certainly is not lavish of praise, has recorded the rise and progress of metropolitan and local newspapers to their present position, and what he said about the independence and ability of the town papers, and the style and spirit and knowledge and fairness of the great dailies I can entirely endorse. (cheers) But a greater than these has lifted up his hands to bless. Monseigneur Satolli, speaking a few days ago, on Saturday last, at the annual dinner of the Gridiron club, which took place in the Arlington, in the capital of the Great Republic below the line, declared the press to be at once the lungs and conscience of a free community, and as he is legate, he must have done this with the sanction and it may be an initiative suggestion of the Pope who now occupies the Vatican. (cheers.) In replying for the House of Commons of Canada at a dinner like this two ideas are borne in on me this evening with which I was never so much im-

pressed before—how much the House of Commons owes to the press, not because of what my friend and chief Sir Mackenzie Bowell has dwelt on, the amelioration of the form of speeches by reporters, nor yet the greatest service of all, the originating of ideas and even policies, which first suggested and popularized by the newspapers, are then taken up, adopted, appropriated, labelled his own by the original and sagacious leader of the hour; but this:—The direct benefit conferred on Parliament and the country by the supplying of able and instructed men who carry into council, committee, debate, accumulations of co-ordinated facts, minds trained to thinking and disquisition, and a mastery of expression which aids the work of legislation, adorns discussion and enhances the value of Parliament as an educative force, the other is—what do you think? the romance that belongs to that parliament. As Mr. Anglin has suggested in proposing the toast, our Canadian Parliament is the fairest and noblest child of that august Parliament on the banks of the Thames and is supposed to be guided by the same traditions, rules and principles, and though I am sorry to say that in some most important particulars she deviates from her mother and model—as daughters in this age are apt to do—and not for her good—it would be well for instance if in Canada ministers were chosen as in England because of their weight in the House—yet is she like her great prototype in this, the large part that journalists, that writers on the events of the day have played in her actions and history and development, and further in the large amount of what I shall coin a word to describe—the Actual—romantic—the extent to which the actual-romantic is

found in what would strike at first sight as prosaic to all and to most dry and repulsively dull. Few men who write produce what is properly speaking entitled to be classified as literature. Nobody claims for a leading article however well written that it is literature, and only very rarely do reviews, pamphlets, essays possess those subtle qualities whether of thought or form which shall make them not only interesting reading but preserve them beyond the period of ephemeral vitality—assuredly however no man can be a first-class journalist without being potentially a writer of literature—and his rapidly constructed essays will have in them the diamond dust that concentrated in a single production would give that to which the world might like to recur, something to preserve, a gem on which the eyes of the future might fix an admiring gaze. The writer of the pamphlets, reviews, essays, and the leader writer belong to the same class. Mr. Gladstone writing on Neapolitan prisoners to-day or the cruelties of Turkey in Armenia, Burke pamphleteering, or the present prime minister of England Lord Salisbury earning money as a young reporter by writing for the *Saturday Review*—a circumstance to which Mr. Goldwin Smith referred—did precisely the same kind of work as the journalist does every day; for that matter the same may be said of Julius Cæsar composing his Commentaries. I conclude then that there is an order of mind that seeks literary expression and that it is of the best order and well adapted to the task of government. In our own day we have had in the House of Commons journalists such as Lord Cranborne (Lord Salisbury the late Prime Minister) Lowe, Leonard Courtney, Justin McCarthy,

Sullivan, T. P. O'Connor, Sir William Vernon Harcourt, the present leader of the House of Commons, one of the original staff of the *Saturday Review* as Mr. Goldwin Smith has already told us, and a dozen others; but take the wider and truer classification of writers on the events of the day and the greatest names in English parliamentary history which at once start out on the pages of memory, may the greatest names in French and German legislative annals a rever, but confining ourselves to England we have to take them at random, Burke, Canning, Gladstone, Disraeli, Bulwer, Fox, Mill, Derby, Brougham, Fawcett, Trevelyan, Dilke, Haughton, Argyll, Laing, Cobden, Dufferin, Earl Grey, Lyon Playfair, Coleridge Addison, Steel, and last but not least John Morley. In Canada at the very fountain of our political life we find the writer—the journalist—standing out pre-eminently. There was Ogle R. Gowan, who in his day as pamphleteer journalist and member of the Legislature exercised a great deal of influence. Then there was Wm Lyon Mackenzie—the founder of the *Colonial Advocate*—the assailer of the *Family Compact*—repeatedly expelled from the Assembly as repeatedly re-elected—a man with the indomitable instinct in him as became a true journalist—and rendering services which can never be forgotten. (cheers) Then we had Sir Francis Hincks starting the *Examiner*, fighting for responsible government in its columns, and carrying into the legislative Assembly the same qualities which had made his paper a power, bestowing on his adopted country the highest gifts, a debater, a statesman, orator, prime minister, diplomatic and successful treaty maker. (hear hear.) I can only men-

tion. in passing Hamilton Foley and John Sheriden Hogan. George Brown owed more of his influence to the *Globe* than even to his speaking and it was as a newspaper man he developed those qualities which made him so powerful in the other arena—contemporary with Brown was Thomas D'Arcy McGee (cheers) a man whose oratory—and this was due to his journalistic and literary training—had the attractive qualities which the literary faculty can alone impart. Tom White, a journalist *pur sang*—one of the best—absolutely the best minister of the interior which we had up to his time. Mr. Ross spoke about the intelligence of the people and Mr. Smith about the improvement and independence of the press. Well here is something from which you may take a hint of action and pointer as to criticism—I saw Sir John Macdonald weep over Hon. Tom White's death—aye, weep before the world in the House. Well I had conflicting feelings at the moment, for a deputation of the members had to wait on him to get him to take Tom White in. Take my friend Mr. Laurier—for he is my friend though we are political foes. (cheers) his grace of expression, his charm of oratory is well known. Well how did he spend the young shaping days of his early manhood? In the editorial rooms of the *Union Nationale* under the guiding eye and the tongue of Mederic Lanctot, writing sketches half historical, half legendry, becoming editor of *Defricheur* in 1867, and passing thence to *l'Avenir*. Sir John Thompson whom we have recently lost was for some six or eight years reporter in the gallery of the Nova Scotia Assembly. Hon. Wm. McDougall was not only one of our greatest debaters, but one of our foremost journal-

ists. Wm. Alexander MacKenzie who rose to be prime minister, and whom we think of as a stone mason rising high, belonged to the journalistic ranks, having started and edited the *Lambton Shield* and as a journalist he acquired facts and a facility of expression which stood him in good stead when he entered Parliament. The Prime Minister who left the room so recently has been a journalist all his life. One great leader I have nearly forgotten, a great man who also belonged to the rank of journalism, the friend of Baldwin, whose articles in the *Minerve* will be found amongst the most brilliant ever contributed to that paper. I speak of Lafontaine;—he too rose to be premier—and then one other name—how refer to the great statesmen journalists and pass him over—the *Tribune*, the journalist, the wit, the orator, the patriot, the political man of genius who ran through each mood of the lyre and was master of all? I speak of Joseph Howe,—and did I desire to swell the list with lesser names we should include Cauchon, who owed all to his writing, and Spence and many others. And now let me say a word or two on

THE ACTUAL ROMANTIC IN PARLIAMENTARY LIFE.

Singularly enough most of this is furnished by the statesmen—journalists. In British parliamentary life we have much that is unexpected, much that creates surprise, much that marks probability, much of the Actual—romantic. Disraeli's life is as romantic as that of his own Vivian Grey.

But for a very good reason there is more of romance—more of the unexpected—the unlikely in the Canadian Parliament—while at the same time we have a somber background of perennial monotony

and lugubrious dulness, weary iteration and a use of figures and statistics which in the majority of cases is foolish and flagrant mis-use. (Laughter and cheers). But against this dim and dusty canvas what striking result does the brush of time—nay—what figures and effects do Chance, Luck, Will, Capacity trace and paint! What colors of surprise, what shades of night and disappointments, baffled plans and balked ambitions and surging passions; what pale and horrid tints do Destiny and Vengeance and Envy; what rays of joy and power, Success and Vanity work in; and amid all, Hope like a beautiful iris, and for the critical and observant eye unobscured and unhidden the face of Duty like a star! In England the statesmen have an easy course—a Roseberry, a Derby, a Palmerston, a Gladstone. With plenty of wealth and opportunity, all their time and power can be given to public life; they have no anxieties; they are coddled in political lore and crowned into statesmanship. But the Canadian statesman has to pick up a living while he works for his grateful country, some of whose citizens will condemn a minister who dies poor, though had he not devoted himself to their service he might have amassed a fortune. Born a poor in the City of Cork by the storied banks of the Lee, emigrating at twenty-five, having received a commercial education, settling in Little York before it foreshadowed the magnificent Toronto of to-day, starting the Examiner newspaper, upholding alone among Canadian journalists of the time the wise and constitutional principles of Lord Durham's report, entering the Legislature for Oxford, becoming a power as a debater, forming a government, negotiating the Treaty of 1854, beaten when ap-

parently at the zenith of his power, appointed Governor of Barbadoes, promoted to British Guinea, retiring with Imperial honors, Finance Minister of Canada, ending his days as a journalist, as editor of the foremost commercial paper in Canada—was not this a romantic life? His friend Robert Baldwin was a figure in public and private truly romantic. D'Arcy McGee's life again—commenced as a patriot and rebel, full of vicissitudes, serving the crown he would have destroyed, shot down because he was at once patriot and loyalist, dying the proto-martyr of the Canadian Confederacy—here is romantic stuff if you like. George Brown's life—the Edinburgh School Boy—the fierce tribune, Prime Minister of Canada, full of stormy battle—this too must be included, and his great rival the little Scotch boy in Kingston, running about the Bay of Quinte, rising to such eminence, accomplishing such great things, now at the nadir of luck and again at the zenith of good fortune and renown—like Dryden's milk white hind

"Oft doomed to death but fated not to die."
(cheers) and in the life also of his sturdy opponent Alexander Mackenzie, the Scotch peasant, the stone mason, and at last Prime Minister, we have the warp and woof of the true romantic. (Cheers). Take our Prime Minister—commencing as a printer's imp (laughter) the printer's Mephistopheles (laughter); Minister of the Crown; Prime Minister; washing type and pulling proofs as a boy, ruling a nation to day as populous as England in the spacious days of Elizabeth and a country as large as the continent of Europe, does not this read like a dream of imagination? But let us take what might well be described as an almost incredible career having everything in it of the true

romantic that of the late premier. Ten years ago to the mass of Canadian people he was unknown, to-day he is among the most renowned of Canadian statesmen. Commencing life as a reporter he becomes Prime Minister of Canada and a member of the Privy Council of the Empire; born in a Haligonian cottage he dies in Windsor Castle when the guest of his Queen and the associate and colleague of the foremost men of the time; rocked in a fifty cent cradle one of the great battle ships of England is his bier and the cannon of an Empire booms the requiem of nations over his pall (a burst of cheering)—and under the Southern cross—as well as where auroral lights flame through the cold vast vacancy of the polar sky—in India—in a hundred isles—over distant lonely seas—on the historic rock of Gibraltar—where the palaces of Stamboul fling their shadows in the Bosphorus—where the fortress of the Czar frowns over the Neva—in the city of the Kaiser—in the capital of European pleasure—in Vienna—in Madrid—in the capital of the Republic of the New World—in that seat of ancient Empire where the eagles of the Cæsars' flew—

"The flag was hoisted half-mast high,
A mournful signal o'er the main,
Seen only when the illustrious die,
Or are in glorious battle slain."

[Loud cheers]. I agree with the opinion expressed by my friend Mr. McLean in an able article in the Canadian Magazine that we may expect the great imperial statesmen of the future will come from the Colonies. Twenty years ago I met Sir John Macdonald for the first time at a dinner in this city. When we went into the drawing room he and I conversed about a hundred things, amongst them, the future of Canada and in his eager way he sketched a time when nascent British nations and empires would come together

for mutual reciprocal imperial action and when those vast Territories which I have the honor to represent here to-night would be opened up and he said in his own eager way: "That's the time I should like to be coming up." He lived to see the Territories opened up and the progress in all that makes and distinguishes a people which we have made is a foreshadowing of what will take place in another quarter of a century—the index finger pointing to a great British nation, allied with the mother country yet freely working out the law of her own life—rich in all that pertains to the happiness, culture power and dignity of a great progressive and prosperous people (cheers).

Mr. McLean, M.P., said Mr. Davin brought gifts to this country among them a Parliamentary style and when that Parliamentary style rose up in the House of Commons they all know the effect it produced. Newspaper men who had done so much for the country were inadequately represented in the Cabinet because newspaper men had not enough *esprit de corps*; but of lawyers who hung together there were ten in the present. He hoped to see this remedied and that newspaper men would act on business principles and then they would see more journalists in Cabinets and stronger governments. [cheers].

Mr. Ives, M.P., said they had a specimen to-night of the eloquence which charmed the House of Commons. He dwelt on the hard, useful, practical work that the House performed and thanked them for the enthusiastic manner in which the toast was drunk. [Cheers].

Mr. Bengough delighted, thrilled, with two comic recitations and the other toasts being gone through a grand and successful banquet was brought to a close with "God Save the Queen."